

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR
SUBJECT Foot and Mouth Disease and Anthrax Vaccines
50X1
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[Redacted]

50X1 1. [Redacted] 50X1
50X1 Work on this began in the USSR in 1939 during the serious foot and mouth
50X1 enzootic, and the research was still in progress [Redacted]
50X1 in 1940. There was a laboratory in Yerevan working on this project
50X1 and it was generally understood that there was another laboratory somewhere
50X1 in central Soviet Russia also working on it. The Yerevan laboratory was
50X1 staffed largely with women technicians and researchers. Dr. R. Bachmolev
50X1 (Р. Б. Ахмольев), a gifted young pathologist who would now be 54 years old,
50X1 is the only scientist [Redacted] having been closely connected with
50X1 this particular line of investigation at the laboratory. He had degrees in
50X1 both human and veterinary medicine and he taught courses at the Federal
50X1 Veterinary College at Yerevan. [Redacted]
50X1 The laboratory
50X1 was a restricted area. [Redacted] saliva was being collected in large
50X1 quantities from infected cattle and sent to the laboratory. In addition,
50X1 the tongues of infected animals were being skinned, stored in jars, and sent
50X1 to the laboratory. [Redacted]
50X1 there was definite optimism about it.
50X1 If a successful vaccine had actually been produced by that time [Redacted]
50X1 heard of its being tried anywhere. [Redacted] the vaccine has by
50X1 now been perfected. But if it has not, [Redacted] the USSR is employ-
50X1 ing some other foot and mouth disease vaccine, such as the one produced in
50X1 Holland [Redacted]
50X1 If Soviet efforts have not been able to produce
50X1 anything as effective as the excellent Dutch vaccine, it may be presumed
50X1 that the Soviet Union has acquired samples of the Dutch product and has

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successfully reproduced it.

2. Certain details of the Soviet system for controlling foot and mouth disease, in the absence of a successful vaccine, may be of interest. When one animal on a collective farm became infected with foot and mouth disease, it was generally the practice to infect deliberately all the other cattle on the farm and on nearby farms. This was done by rubbing a towel around in the mouth of the infected animal and then rubbing it in the mouths of the other cattle. After this was done, a strict and thorough quarantine was imposed over the area. This practice was based on the fact that eventual infection of the whole local cattle population was inevitable as soon as one animal became afflicted and the necessary period of quarantine could be reduced greatly by inducing simultaneous infection. In these instances, an average of 75% of the cattle recovered. [redacted] the mortality rate could have been reduced if the epizooty had been allowed to run its natural course. But even if it could have been reduced, the gain would have been more than offset by the economic wastes involved in a long period of quarantine.

3. [redacted]

This vaccine consisted of live anthrax bacteria inactivated with carbolic acid. It began to be used in the USSR in 1932. It is a stable and highly effective vaccine but it was dangerous to use. There was the constant hazard of a slight overdose, which could be fatal. If the bottles containing the vaccine were not immediately and carefully destroyed, there was danger of spreading the disease. The law required that all these bottles be burned. Despite the most careful precautions, veterinarians and their assistants frequently infected small cuts or scratches on their hands with the vaccine and suffered mild but painful cases of the disease. Another problem was the incidence of local abscesses at the point of injection as a result of uncleanness or intra-muscular injection. Such abscesses occurred in about five per cent of injections as a result of one of these reasons. The prescribed injection was strictly sub-cutaneous but a jumpy animal sometimes caused accidental intra-muscular injections. These various hazards were a source of irritation to everyone concerned with the vaccine, but the effectiveness of the vaccine was recognized and there was never, [redacted] any interest in developing a new one.

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